β—10

HEY, KYON.
ABOUT YUKI...
DO YOU THINK MAYBE IT WOULD BE GOOD TO FORCE HER TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL?
TA (TAP)
TA
IT'S LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT TO HAPPEN ON A BIGGER SCALE...
I'M JUST WORRIED.
AND NOT JUST ABOUT YUKI...

The Surprise of Haruhi Suzumiya IX

I'M GOING TO YUKI'S WITH MIKURU.
YOU STAY IN THE CLUB ROOM.
THEY MIGHT COME.
SO I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO PLAY BACKUP.
PLUS, YOU'RE TOTALLY USELESS WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING CARE OF YUKI.
MAN, WHAT A TERRIBLE THING TO HEAR.
P! (JAB)
WHAT? WHY?
I WON'T EVEN GET ANY OF ASAHINA-SAN'S TEA.
NEW.
CLUB.
MEM-BERS.
GOT IT!?

I GUESS I'LL BE MINDING THE CLUB ROOM TODAY.
HM?
HEY, TANIGUCHI.
PERFECT TIMING.
I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT KUYOH.
KYON, BUDDY.
I REALLY DON'T WANNA THINK ABOUT THAT.
SOMETHING WAS WRONG WITH ME BACK THEN.
C'MON, DON'T SAY THAT.
ガバァ
GABAA (TACKLE)
WHAT KIND OF THINGS DID YOU DO WITH HER AFTER CHRISTMAS?
YOU AT LEAST WENT ON DATES, RIGHT?
DON'T OPEN OLD WOUNDS, MAN...

AT FIRST I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT KIND OF GIRL SHE REALLY WAS...
I MEAN, SHE WAS HOT, SO.
YOU SAID SHE WAS THE ONE WHO AP-PROACHED YOU, RIGHT?
YEAH, IT WAS JUST BEFORE CHRIST-MAS.
ALTHOUGH THAT EERIE AURA IS STILL PRETTY OFF-PUTTING.
HOT?
THINKING BACK, I GUESS THAT'S TRUE.
YOU KNOW, THE BASICS.
MOV-IES... FOOD ...
I GUESS SHE WAS A LITTLE STRANGE.
THE OLD YEAR TURNED INTO THE NEW YEAR.
AND PRETTY SOON I WAS THE ONE INVITING HER OUT.
SOMETIMES SHE WOULD SUGGEST PLACES TO GO TO.

I CAN'T IMAGINE SHE WOULD REALLY INITIATE CONVER-SATION.
WHAT DID YOU TALK ABOUT?
SHE ALWAYS WANTED TO GO TO FAST FOOD PLACES.
WHICH I THOUGHT WAS WEIRD.
HUH!?
ALL ON HER OWN? REALLY?
LIKE SHE'D BRING STUFF UP.
SURE, SHE WAS QUIET, BUT SOMETIMES IT WAS LIKE A SWITCH WAS FLIPPED AND SHE'D START TALKING.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
ANOTHER CAT-LOVER?
I THOUGHT I WAS GONNA FALL ASLEEP.
SHE INSISTED THAT CATS WERE MORE ADVANCED LIFE-FORMS THAN HUMANS AND WENT ON AND ON...
SHE SAID SHE WANTED A CAT.

I MEAN, WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO SAY TO THAT?
ON THE SCALE OF HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF YEARS!?
SHE LIKED THE WEIRDEST, MOST OBSCURE TOPICS TOO.
LIKE HUMAN EVOLUTION AND STUFF...
SO THAT'S REALLY ALL YOU CARE ABOUT, HUH?
AND A HOTTIE TO BOOT!
HELL YEAH. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME A GIRL HAD EVER HIT ON ME.
BUT YOU KEPT GOING OUT WITH HER ANY-WAY?
AND BEFORE I KNEW IT, SHE WAS GONE! HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HER SINCE!
OUCH.
...AND SHE JUST SAYS, "I WAS MIS-TAK-EN!"
I RUSHED TO MEET HER AT THE PROM-ISED TIME...
AND THEN OUR RELATION-SHIP WAS OVER IN A FLASH.

Hi!
Hi!
Hi!
KUYOH SUOH.
SHE'S ACTUALLY QUITE FOOLISH, IN A WAY.
AND THIS IS JUST MY IMAGI-NATION RUN-NING WILD...

I'VE BEEN DUMPED!
AND RIGHT BEFORE VALEN-TINE'S DAY TOO.

IT WAS AROUND WHEN KOIZUMI AND I HAD DUG HOLES ALL OVER THAT MOUNTAIN ...
...AND HAD OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH KYOKO TACHIBANA AND FUJIWARA.

SO YOU WERE THE ONE HANGING OUT WITH HER ALL THAT TIME.
?
PON (PAT)

WHAT THE HECK KINDA WAY TO EAT IS THAT!?
PERO
PERO
PERO (LICK)
PERO
PERO
PERO
IF KUYOH HAD MADE CONTACT WITH ME BEFORE HARUHI'S CHRISTMAS PARTY...
...THINGS COULD'VE GOTTEN REALLY CRAZY.

GROSS, MAN.
HUH?
HAVE YOU TAKEN ONE TOO MANY ROUND-HOUSE KICKS FROM HARUHI OR SOME-THING?
GA! (GRAB)
YOU'RE ACTU-ALLY AN AMAZING GUY...
KIRA KIRA KIRA KIRA (SPARKLE)
TANI-GUCHI.
PA! (WHAP)
...SAME GOES FOR YOU, PAL.
ANYWAY...
YOU'RE CREEPING ME OUT, MAN.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE FOR HER.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO KEEP BABYSITTING SUZUMIYA UNTIL GRADUATION.
YOU'RE SERIOUS BUSINESS, KYON.
YOU LASTED A WHOLE YEAR IN THAT CRAZY CLUB.

BABY-SITTING, HUH.
KO (CLICK)
KO
I'M NOT REALLY PLANNING TO GO TO THE SAME COLLEGE AS HER...
...BUT I WONDER WHAT HARUHI'S THINKING.
HARUHI, WHO IS LIKE UNTO A GOD.
TA (TMP)
HM?
KO
HUH?

UH...
ARE YOU A FRESHMAN?
AH, SEN-PAI!?
IT LOOKS LIKE I GOT MIXED-UP!
WAIT, NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.
THIS IS THE SOS BRIGADE, RIGHT!?
THAT'S NOT THE MISTAKEN PART...
I JUST GOT OFF TRACK!
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME MEETING YOU, RIGHT?
HEE-HEE, THAT'S OKAY.
THIS ISN'T THAT BIG A MISTAKE!
YOU CAN REMEMBER MEETING ME OR FORGET ME, EITHER WAY'S FINE.
!?

I MEAN, THERE'S NO WAY YOU WON'T, AFTER ALL!
KYA HA!
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND SOON ENOUGH!
THESE THINGS HAPPEN, Y'KNOW?
JUST PROMISE ME THAT, OKAY?
だ DA
だだ DA
だ DA
だ DA
だ

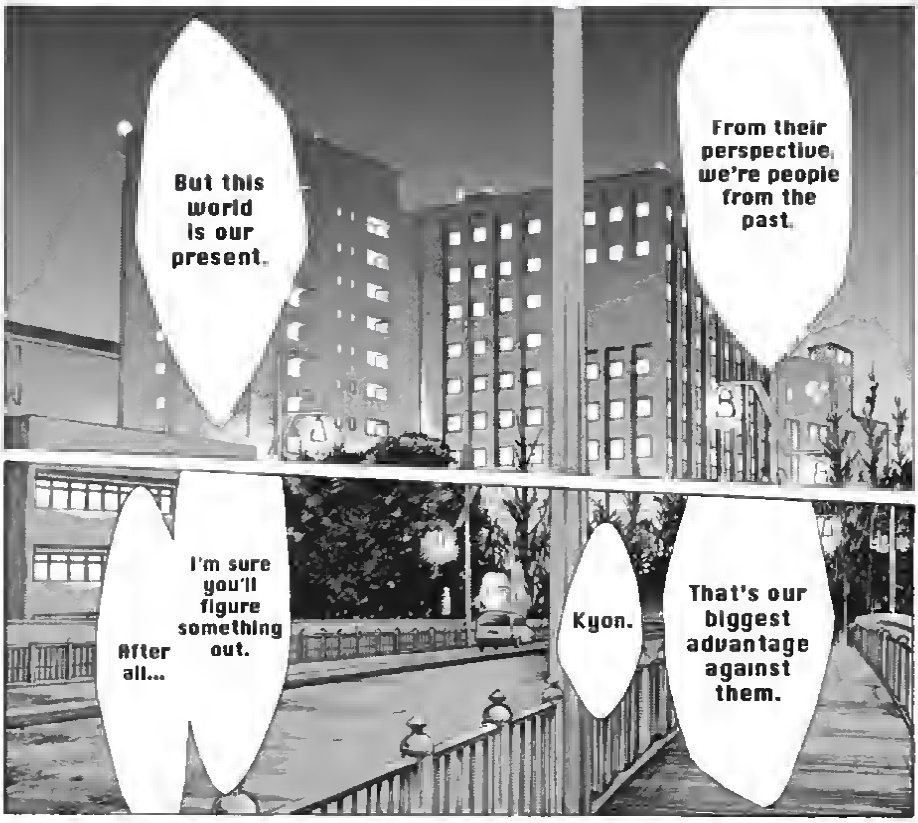
DID THAT GIRL LEAVE IT HERE?
A FLOWER?
WHO... WAS THAT?
BATAN (SLAM)
DID I JUST LET HER ESCAPE?
HA (GASP)
COULD SHE SERIOUSLY HAVE BEEN A PROSPECTIVE BRIGADE MEMBER?
...SHE REMINDS ME OF A CERTAIN SOMEONE.
STILL, THAT PUSHINESS...
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN? WHEN? WHERE?
NO, IT CAN'T BE.

KYON.
FUJIWARA-KUN WANTS US TO MEET IN FRONT OF THE STATION AGAIN TOMORROW.
THAT NIGHT ...
IT'S FINALLY HAPPENING...
IT'S UNKNOWN WHETHER THEY'RE GOING TO ELIMINATE ME...
...OR JUST TRY TO USE ME.
HE SEEMS SERIOUS.
HE MEANS TO FINISH THINGS THIS TIME.

BUT ONE THING'S CERTAIN.
AND THAT'S YOU.
You and your decisions are the key to everything.

WHATEVER'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THE WORLD, NEITHER YOU NOR I CAN DO MUCH TO CHANGE IT.
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT TOO MUCH.

What we can change is the future.
WE HERE IN THE PRESENT DON'T HAVE MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT.
LET'S LET THE FUTURE WORK ITSELF OUT, OKAY?


But this world is our present.
From their perspective, we're people from the past.
After all...
I'm sure you'll figure something out.
Kyon.
That's our biggest advantage against them.

And that's you.
...THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON BOTH SUZUMIYA-SAN AND I CHOSE.

SASAKI.
WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ME?
UNLIKE HARUHI, YOU'RE TOTALLY SELF-AWARE.
SO THERE MUST BE SOME REASON, RIGHT?
HEH... YOUR THICK-HEADED-NESS HAS ALWAYS GIVEN ME FITS ...
...BUT I'M SURPRISED YOU WOULD TAKE IT THIS FAR.
LET'S SPEAK HYPO-THET-ICALLY.
LET'S SAY YOU'VE BOUGHT A LOTTERY TICKET.
Here, Suzumiya-san and I are the house.
Do you see?
And surprisingly, the numbers Suzumiya-san and I chose at random are the same, save for the last two digits.
And your ticket matches ...

By your power and no one else's.
THEY HAVE TO BE CHOSEN.
BUT YOU DON'T YET KNOW WHAT THE LAST TWO DIGITS YOU'RE HOLDING ARE.
.....
THAT'S A VERY ANNOYED SILENCE I'M HEARING.
YOU'RE SO HONEST, KYON.

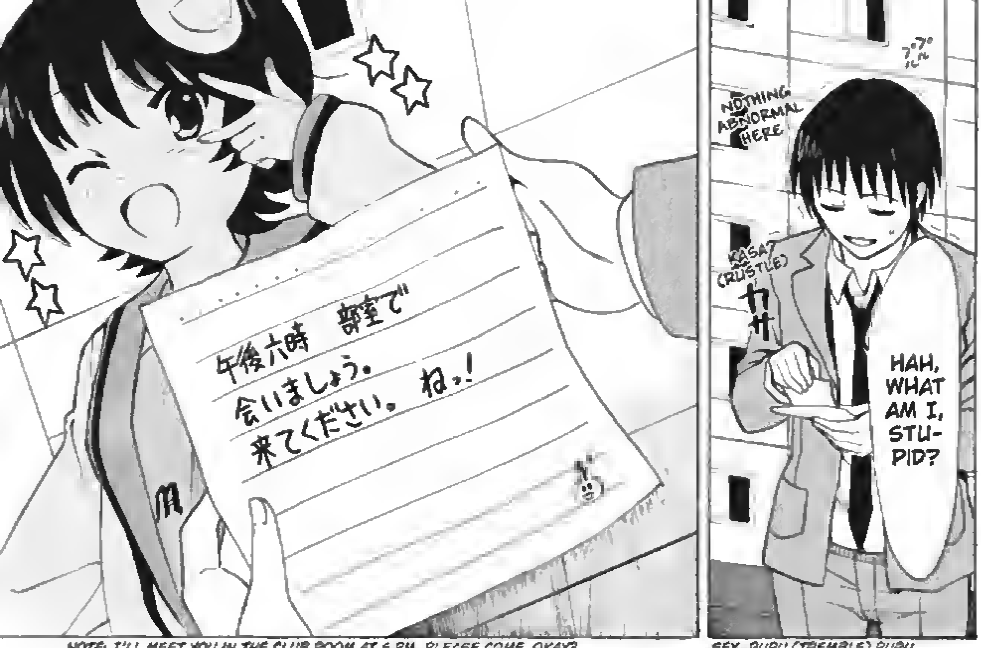
ALL RIGHT, SASAKI.
LEAVE IT TO ME. I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
MY TRUST IN YOU IS DEEPER THAN THE CRUSHING DEPTHS ON A NEWLY-LAUNCHED SUBMARINE.
GO AHEAD AND PUSH THE DOWN-TRIM AS MUCH AS YOU WANT.
SEE YOU, OLD FRIEND.

α—11
THE PAST WEEK HAD BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY BUSY.
HARUHI'S EXAMINATIONS, MEETING YASUMI ...
IT WAS ALREADY FRIDAY...
THESE GUYS MIGHT DO ANYTHING.
AND I'D FELT UNEASY EVER SINCE MEETING THOSE THREE.
TEE HEE HEE HEE!
YOU'D THINK THE USUAL SCURRYING AROUND WOULD'VE ENSUED ...
...BUT NOTHING HAD HAPPENED, WHICH WAS EVEN MORE BAFFLING.

PERHAPS UNBEKNOWNST TO ME, THEY WERE STRUGGLING WITH NAGATO, KOIZUMI, OR ASAHINA-SAN.
THEY WERE ALL UNITED IN THEIR GOAL OF PRESERVING HARUHI'S PEACEFUL LIFE, AFTER ALL.
STILL ...
WOULD ASAHINA-SAN...? NAH..
IT WAS STRANGE THEY HADN'T SAID ANYTHING TO ME.
KACHA (KACHK)
カチャ
BWUH?
AFTER ALL THIS, WAS I STILL BEING TREATED LIKE AN OUTSIDER?

ENVELOPE: YASUMI WATAHASHI

HOW MANY TIMES HAS THIS HAPPENED TO ME SO FAR?
THINK BACK, NOW...
BA (WHAP)
KYORO
KYORO (GLANCE)
SO FAR THESE NOTES HAVEN'T EXACTLY BEEN PORTALS TO ROMANTIC BLISS...
ASAKURA, ASAHINA THE ELDER...
THINK BACK!
HAS SPRINGTIME FINALLY COME FOR ME...?
IS THIS TRULY A LOVE LETTER?
SENPAAAI!
SENPAI!
...SHE SEEMED TOTALLY HARMLESS, SO...
BUT MAYBE THIS TIME...
FLOWERS!

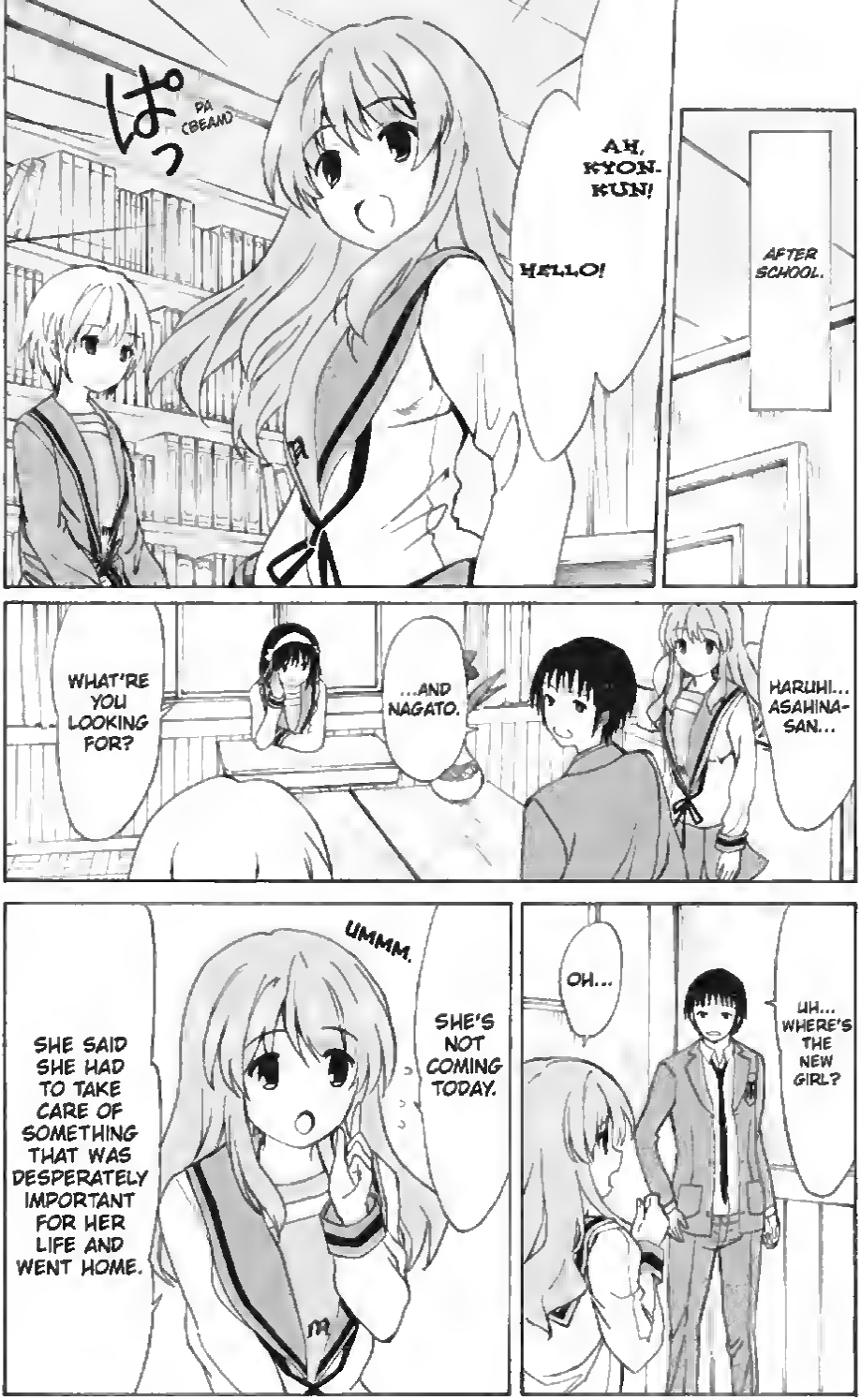

午後六時　部室で
会いましょう。
来てください。ね。!
NOTE: I'LL MEET YOU IN THE CLUB ROOM AT 6 PM. PLEASE COME, OKAY?
NOTHING ABNORMAL HERE
KASA (RUSTLE)
カサ
HAH, WHAT AM I, STUPID?
SFX. PURU (TREMBLE) PURU

...BUT, YEAH, IT'S SUSPICIOUS.
...IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

YOUR FOREHEAD'S BEEN WRINKLED ALL MORNING.
IF SOMETHING'S BOTHERING YOU, BRING IT TO ME, YOUR BRIGADE CHIEF!
SO, WHAT TO DO?
A LITTLE EXTRA CAUTION NEVER HURTS.

OKAY.
SAY YOU'VE GOT A PROBLEM THAT YOU'RE NOT SURE HOW TO AP-PROACH.
WHAT, FOR MODERN LIT?
I HAVE TO KNOW WHAT THE QUESTION-WRITER'S ANSWER WOULD BE.
WHAT A STUPID QUES-TION.
YEAH, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WHATEVER A WRITER WAS THINKING...
...IS INSIDE THEM ALONE, SO THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING.
NO, I MEAN ...
...IN THIS CASE THE WRITER AND THE QUESTION-ASKER ARE THE SAME.
WELL, THEN IT'S SIMPLE.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO...
BAN (WHAM)
...IS JUST ASK WHO-EVER WROTE IT!

WAIT...
WHICH CLASS WAS SHE IN, AGAIN?
MMM... SHE'S TOTALLY RIGHT.
IT MIGHT'VE BEEN BAD MANNERS TO SHOW UP EARLY DESPITE THE NOTE'S INSTRUCTION TO COME AT SIX O'CLOCK...
... NEVER-THELESS ...
THAT'S WEIRD.
SHE'S NOT HERE?
I WOULD'VE THOUGHT HER SMALL SIZE WOULD'VE MADE HER WEIRDLY EASIER TO SPOT, BUT...


AFTER SCHOOL.
AH, KYON-KUN!
HELLO!
ぱっ
PA (BEAM)
HARUHI... ASAHINA-SAN...
...AND NAGATO.
WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING FOR?
UH... WHERE'S THE NEW GIRL?
OH...
SHE'S NOT COMING TODAY.
UMMM.
SHE SAID SHE HAD TO TAKE CARE OF SOMETHING THAT WAS DESPERATELY IMPORTANT FOR HER LIFE AND WENT HOME.

AWWW...
SHE BOWED OVER AND OVER AND SEEMED VERY, VERY SORRY...
AWWWWWW
SO, SO CUTE..!
UH-HUH
SHE LOOKED AT ME WITH THOSE EYES, LIKE A LITTLE BABY ANIMAL...
WHAT THE HECK?
YAY YAY YAY!
WASN'T SHE SUPPOSED TO MEET ME HERE AT SIX?
I DON'T GET WHAT THIS MYSTERY GIRL IS PLAYING AT.
HARUHI.
DID YOU HEAR ANY-THING?
ONLY THAT SHE WAS GOING TO SKIP CLUB ACTIVITIES TODAY.
"I'M SO SORRY, YOU MADE ME A FULL BRIGADE MEMBER, YET..." SHE SAID. SHE WAS ALMOST CRYING.

Nagato.
Who is Yasumi Watahashi?
SIX O'CLOCK... WHERE'S SHE GOING TO BE UNTIL THEN?
WHAT IS SHE PLANNING TO DO?
No one? She has to be somebody.
With a class number, and a year.
She is no one.
No student with that name exists in this school.
Doesn't exist?
So that means, um...
Oh, right.

SHE WAS OBVIOUSLY WEIRD, I GUESS.
GOOD GRIEF. SO SHE IS GOING TO BE HARD TO DEAL WITH.
That is a logical conclusion.
So it's an alien.
Someone's posing as a North High student and sneaking in just for after-school activities.
No.
Time travelers? Espers?
No.
Aliens?
So who's controlling her?
NAGATO OFFERING AN ELABORATION? THAT'S RARE.
YASUMI-CHAN BROUGHT IT IN.
So she's just randomly posing as a North High student?
HEY.
WHERE'D THIS FLOWER COME FROM?
Nor is she from another world.

I CANNOT SAY ANYTHING.
NOT RIGHT NOW.
IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT SUCH IS THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION.
WHAT?

SHE SAID IT WAS REALLY RARE, SO WE SHOULD KEEP IT IN THE CLUB ROOM.
LIKE A TREASURE.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME NAGATO HAS EXPRESSED RESERVES LIKE "FOR NOW."
BUT THAT'S NOT ALL.
NAGATO REFUSING?
REFUSING ME?

THIS— SURELY THIS FORE-TELLS CALAM-ITY.
WHO DECIDED THAT?
THE REASONING THAT IT WILL RESULT IN A HIGHER PROBABILITY OF A FAVORABLE OUTCOME IS MINE.
DEPEND-ING ON TIME AND CIRCUM-STANCES ...
OPERATING IN RESTRICTED SPACE, THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT ACTING IN IGNORANCE CAN BE MORE EFFECTIVE.
...THAT LETTER .....
YOU MAY GO.
SHE MEANS YOU NO HARM.
ON THE CONTRARY— IT CAN BE INFERRED THAT SHE WISHES TO BE OF USE TO YOU.
AND I'M THE IGNORANT ONE, HUH?

TRUTH IS, I'D GUESSED AS MUCH MYSELF.
I CAN'T HELP BUT GROAN.
SHE WAS THE PLATONIC IDEAL. SO WHAT WAS SUSPICIOUS ABOUT HER?
WHO WOULDN'T WANT A NEW CLUB MEMBER LIKE THIS?
THIS WAS A YOUTHFUL GIRL WHO'D PASSED HARUHI'S UNREASONABLE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS.
WAS MY CURRENT IGNORANCE BECAUSE SOMEONE WAS WITHHOLDING THOSE ANSWERS FROM ME?
OR HAD I ALREADY BEEN GIVEN A HINT?
MAYBE I CAN GET SOME ANSWERS IF I DO WHAT THE LETTER SAYS.

THE SURPRISE OF HARUHI SUZUMIYA IX : END

CUP: TEA

The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya